

Borough celebrates being a Twin for 25 years

10 June 2022



Over the Platinum Jubilee Bank Holiday weekend, Epsom and Ewell entertained a large group of visitors from its French twin town, Chantilly. Guests included Chantilly's Deputy Mayor and members of the Chantilly Comité de Jumelage (Twinning Committee). The occasion celebrated 25 years of the official signing of a Twinning Charter in 1995, the visit having been postponed for two years due to the pandemic.

Chantilly is a commune in Northern France. Surrounded by Chantilly Forest, the town of 10,863 inhabitants (2017) lies about 24 miles northeast of Paris and with six neighbouring communes forms an urban area of 37,209 inhabitants (2017 census).

The Château de Chantilly was home to the Princes of Condé, cousins of the Kings of France, from the 17th to the 19th centuries. It now houses the Musée Condé. Chantilly is also known for its horse racing track, Chantilly Racecourse, where prestigious races are held for the Prix du Jockey Club and Prix de Diane. Chantilly and the surrounding communities are home to the largest racehorse-training community in France. Chantilly is also home to the Living Museum of the Horse, with stables built by the Princes of Condé.

Over the years, many such visits have taken place, links between schools, clubs, choirs and individuals have been established, and friendships made. This weekend some of the original contacts from the Chantilly and the Epsom Model Railway Clubs were reunited. There were also new introductions, with two members of Chantilly's Karate Shotokan club joining the Chief Coach and members of Mo-Ichido Martial Arts Club for an impressive training session, and high school teachers meeting to discuss involvement in an international project in Chantilly. Meanwhile, the rest of the party were taken on a guided tour to Ermyn Lodge breeder and trainer's yard, and the historic stables at the Durdans. There were some more official, commemorative moments, when The Mayor of Epsom and Ewell, Councillor Clive Woodbridge, and the Mayoress, Mrs Mary Woodbridge, joined for the planting of a European Oak tree in Rosebery Park, and a visit to Epsom marketplace to show off the recently placed Derby Hall of Fame roundels which feature notable Derby winners, including 1965 winner Sea Bird from Chantilly. Time out was allowed, of course, for lunch at a local pub and essential shopping in the Ashley Centre.



No celebration would be complete without speeches, delivered in English and French by both parties, and the exchange of gifts, with Epsom and Ewell presenting Chantilly with a display case of limited edition Jubilee coins, and an individual commemorative £5 coin for each visitor. The Mayor of Epsom and Ewell was delighted to receive a very handsome model of a horse's head, mounted and engraved on interlinked horseshoes. This will be on display in the Town Hall in due course.

The Epsom and Ewell Town Twinning Association

The Epsom and Ewell Town Twinning Association is always delighted to hear from organisations looking for their equivalent in Chantilly, as well as individuals offering language skills or seeking a way to improve their French. The Association has a regular programme of local events in the Borough, both social and educational, allowing the chance to practise speaking French. There is a very popular annual French Public Speaking Competition for Schools, run jointly with Epsom Rotary, and regular Soirées Françaises for members. Of course there are also fundraisers like quizzes and the appreciation of French food and wine from time to time. Advice on visiting Chantilly, where to stay and what to see, is available too.

Established in 1994, Epsom and Ewell Town Twinning Association is a non-profit association, funded by members' subscriptions and fundraising, and run by a group of volunteers to fulfil the obligations of the formal twinning agreement signed by the Mayors of Chantilly and Epsom and Ewell the following year. It is not supported financially by the Borough.

For more information on The Epsom and Ewell Town Twinning Association:

Or to register interest in joining, please see our website www.epsomtwinning.com or email contact@epsomtwinning.com .